
Understanding the Psycho-Social Environment of Pakistan: Geography, Historical Experience and Trauma in Relation to National Character

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Pakistan, in terms of its physical and psycho-social environment, is one of the most vulnerable states in the world. Since its independence in 1947, it has struggled to achieve socio-economic stability, internal and external security and good governance. However, extremism, bad governance, authoritarianism and lack of tolerance are the hallmarks of Pakistani polity since many decades. This study is based upon the framework of analysis developed by Jared Diamond in his various historical studies. His framework encompasses the evolution and development of trajectories of progress in human existence on the basis of available compulsions and opportunities offered by geography, environment and historical experiences. The present paper tries to explore the causes of the ills of Pakistani society by tracing their origins in geography, history and the traumatic events which have contributed in shaping the character and outlook of the people and the state of Pakistan. Some of relevant analogies have been drawn from the national characters of few other nations too which have passed through the same historical experiences or locked in geographical barriers as are being faced by Pakistan.

Key words: Geography, environment, social-psychology, national character, trauma, historical experience, psycho-social environment

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This paper discusses the psycho-social environment of Pakistan by applying the theoretical framework developed by Jared Diamond to explain and interpret history of the world.¹ Diamond is of the opinion that historical developments have strong scientific foundations rooted in biology, geography and environment. He is of the view that different historical courses of the different regions of the world are due to difference in their environments and not due to their people. Humans are similar due to biology but different due to their geography. Every human society has limited choices due to certain geographical and environmental limitations. A state's position on political map of the world is determined by its geographical location, more than its philosophy of governance. Diamond is of the opinion that sharing of borders with hostile neighbors and having friendly trade partners are other important factors that contribute into the rise and fall of a state or society. Another important factor on which the future of a state or society depends is its response to its problems either environmental or other issues. He is of the view that geography defines the constraints and opportunities of a society. For example, Great Britain which is an island had no fears of frequent land attacks. Therefore it developed peacefully over hundreds of years and it plausibly is a reason that democracy developed there. In contrast, Russia has few if any natural barriers and being a huge country was open to invasion on several fronts. It resulted in Russia's insecurity and suspicious national character which is visible in its tumultuous past. Mesopotamia (today's Iraq) was located on a route which was used by the great conquerors in their eastward incursions. The example in point is of Alexander the Great who turned the balance of power westwards irrevocably. Resultantly, the history of invasion and suppression has resulted in a suspicious national attitude of the people of Iraq.

Historical experiences, defined mainly by geographical factors, also play a major role in shaping the national character of a nation. The important historical factors which have shaped the psycho-social environment of Pakistan include the continuous onslaughts starting from Aryans till the ongoing Americans' so called war against terror. This region was attacked so many times by various conquerors which left great and indelible scars on the psychology of the people of this area. These historical experiences rooted in geography and post independence traumatic events have contributed in shaping present Pakistani national character. A sense of insecurity has resulted in developing trends of aggression and intolerance on the one hand and escapism on the other in Pakistani society.

Geography and National Character: Since the ancient Greek times, scholars have tried to understand the causation between geographical factors and national traits. Herodotus, while writing about the Persian emperor Cyrus says that he admonished his soldiers against the comforts of life in Greece. He said, 'soft countries breed soft men' [Broek, 1967, 14]. Different scholars have written on the relationship between geography and national character. Aristotle observes:

The nations inhabiting the cold places are full of spirit but somewhat deficient in intelligence and skill, so that they continue comparatively free, but lacking in political organization and capacity to rule their neighbors. The peoples of Asia on the other hand are intelligent and skillful in temperament, but lacking spirit, so that they are in continuous subjection and slavery. But the Greek race participates in both characters, just as it occupies the middle position geographically [Paassen, 1957, 327-328].

Aristotle's assertion still holds true with regard to some places of Asia and Africa. South Asia as well as the African continent have been victims of harsh climates. In both of these areas people lack spirit of initiative. Most of the countries in Africa as well as South Asia were colonies of the West during the colonial age, getting independence in the middle of the 20th century. The cold climate of Europe has effects on the lives of the inhabitants which are visible in their daily lives. People residing in European continent are hardworking and resilient. Initiative and thrill define their character for the last many centuries. For instance, the long nights of the polar region have molded the psychology of Eskimos.

Globalization has placed the relevance of geography into the center stage in today's world. Converse of a general impression that the globalization might have reduced the significance of geography it is rather enforcing it. Distances are shrinking both in time and space. Old enmities and prejudices are being revisited. In some regions as in Europe it has contributed to a temporary reunion. However, ethnic divisions still hold sway and there is fear that the common European identity will one day be a victim of the deep-rooted economic differences and geographical identities. Many states are weakening as a result of communication revolution and economic integration.² The greatest threat to these states from within is the local, ethnic and religious divide which is being reinforced as a result of the geographical factors. Geographically Europe is much more indented and includes many peninsulas and two large islands. As a result, Europe has resisted the efforts of unification of such determined conquerors as Charlemagne, Napoleon and Hitler; even the "Roman Empire at its peak never controlled more than half of Europe's territory [Diamond, 2005, 414]."

Of all the factors which shape the national character of a nation, geography is the most important. It is the source of a country's strengths as well as its weakness. If a country is surrounded by hostile neighbors it will spend most of its resources on fortifying its defenses. The hostile neighbors can distract each other to become more prosperous and productive societies. A society might be conquered by hostile neighbors when it is weakened by combination of factors including economic, political and environmental problems like Rome's fall at the hands of Barbarian (Diamond, 2006, 13-14). A country which has friendly neighbors or whose borders are protected by natural frontiers such as mountains, oceans, or a buffer state will spend its resources to develop its economy and thereby society. For instance, United States is separated from other continents by vast bodies of water, almost three thousand miles to the East and six thousand

miles to the West, which is a permanent factor regarding its current dominant position in the world (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1999, 145-151).

The large bodies of water inhibit the power projection of land forces vis-à-vis another state (Mearsheimer, 2001, 81). No doubt, the importance of this geographical factor has lessened as a result of communications, transportation, and modern warfare techniques. But from the point of view of the US policy makers it still makes a great difference. The geographical location of Italy is such that it is very difficult to invade central Europe from its territory and vice versa. This geographical situation of Italy was the most important factor in the military considerations of Italian policy makers in the 19th and 20th centuries (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1999, 145-151). The geographical location of Italy presented it with many strategic advantages during the nineteenth century Italian unification too.

The geographical situation of the former Soviet Union was such that it comprises an enormous landmass, almost one-seventh of the entire land area of the Earth. This large area was a source of weakness as well as great strength. It frustrated the attempts of Napoleon and Hitler to conquer the Soviet Union. The invaders were frustrated at every step as a result of the demand of an increased supply line and the harsh Russian winters. A great number of troops were required to keep the ever increasing lines of communication alive which both Napoleon and Hitler failed to supply. In the end this geographical factor became a death bed for the invading armies making the conquest of Russian territory impossible. It is a territory which sapped the strength of the conqueror instead of being swallowed by the conqueror (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1999, 183]. However, in the wake of Russia's economic downslide, it succumbed to its weakness of being a huge territory difficult to keep intact and it eventually dismembered.

Pakistan: Its Geography and Environment

With the changing political scenario, the artificial borders which were created during the colonial period are crumbling in fissiparous ways. These 'shatter zones' will implode, explode or will maintain a fragile equilibrium. These shatter zones include the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent. The most critical state in the Indian Sub-continent is Pakistan. To most of the scholars its dysfunction is the direct result of its lack of geographic logic. Pakistan is composed of disparate ethnic groups; Punjabis, Sindhis, Balochs, and Pashtuns all of them having different geographical centers within Pakistan. For an outsider it looks an artificial construct. Religion is an insufficient glue to hold these different ethnicities together and united. It is visible in the ethnic based rivalries driven by xenophobia which have torn asunder the socio-political fabric of the country. In Karachi, the ethnic Mohajirs are pitted against Pathan, Punjabis and Sindhis. The recent spate of violence and hatred against Punjabis in Balochistan is another example in point.

Geographically, Pakistan is located in a fragile region. Afghanistan is a fragile state, which is in a state of war for the last three decades. Pakistan shares almost two thousand six hundred kilometers of its border with Afghanistan which

is porous and unguarded. It is very easy to cross this border at any point which is visible in the recent influx of Taliban fighters from Afghanistan taking refuge in Pakistani side of the border. As a neighbor of a fragile state, Pakistan is also at risk of facing the hardships of refugees, transnational criminal networks, drug trafficking and last but not the least the Kalashnikov culture. The war in Afghanistan has already manifested bitter consequences for Pakistan. It has collapsed the security apparatus in Pakistan which is visible in the worsened law and order situation. Diamond is of the view that "The interconnections of globalization have created a new nexus among economics, governance and security as globalization has also created this nexus among various societies of the globe. A collapse in one of them will eventually result in the failure of the rest" [Diamond, 1996, 23]. This framework can be applied on the current situation of Pakistan. This has happened in Pakistan, where the security collapse has also resulted in economic and governance failure.

On its eastern side Pakistan shares borders with its arch enemy India with which it has bitter memories since partition of India in 1947. The Kashmir dispute is the centre of gravity around which the policies of both countries revolve. Pakistan and India have fought two full fledged wars and a number of limited wars only embittering the bitter memories of the partition. Fear of India is visible in Pakistan's policy circles and its defense allocations. According to Anatol Lievan, "This fear is exaggerated, but not irrational, and neither of the policies which result from it" [Anatol, 2009, 7]. Pakistan's relations with India highlight its behavior since 9/11. Fear of an attack from India on the eastern front has thwarted its full fledged response in the US led war in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Fear of a US—India alliance against Pakistan if the latter refused to cooperate in US-led war against terror forced Musharraf to help the US during post 9/11 period. On the other hand, fear of India has also factored in Pakistani military thinking and its unwillingness to redeploy troops from eastern to western borders [Ibid., 8].

Pakistani establishment has long cherished the hope of using the geostrategic position of Pakistan as a bargain trick to force US to pressurize India over the Kashmir dispute. Refusal of US to play this role has heightened the longstanding feelings of betrayal in Pakistan. The recent tilt of US towards India and the Indo-US nuclear deal has added fuel to the fire. Pakistan's help in the war against terror is limited by strategic calculations and a mass sentiment. The mass sentiment views Taliban as engaged in a legitimate war against the foreign occupation as was the case of the struggle of Afghan mujahidin against the infidel Soviet Union in the 1980s. In terms of strategic calculation, Pakistani establishment policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan is driven both by fear and ambition. The fear is that an Afghanistan under the rule of Northern alliance will be a hostile neighbor and an Indian client. It will be an opportunity for India to encircle Pakistan. This fear is strengthened by the assumption that India is supporting the separatist elements in Baluchistan as well as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. As a result a sizeable majority in the Pakistani establishment, military as well as civilians,

believes that maintaining close and cordial relations with Taliban is a sine-qua-non for safeguarding national interests in Afghanistan [Ibid., 8-9].³ The so-called strategic depth theory hinges on these calculations. Both the countries are inseparable geographically. It is reinforced by Pushtuns' presence on both sides of the Durand line. On these grounds the US has lumped both Pakistan and Afghanistan in the strategy known as 'AF-Pak strategy.'

A national character based on exaggerated fears from India as well as Afghanistan has provided a golden opportunity for military to channel financial resources to build up a huge arsenal. This has adversely affected the development sectors in Pakistan. Any symptom of détente with India on the part of civilian government has resulted in a severe backlash from the powerful military. The government has either to acquiesce in to the military dictates or sent packing. The dismissal of Nawaz Sharif's government in 1999 by general Musharraf is a case in point. The economic potential which needs to be spent for human resource development because Pakistan is one of those countries where youth bulge is prominent feature with more than sixty per cent population comprising youth is being channeled to military and security expenditures.

Another geographical factor which has shaped Pakistani national character was the Communist threat during the Cold War period. The threat perception from United States of Soviet Russia was rooted in its colonial heritage. The British Indian government had a threat perception from its north-western borders in the shape of Russia's advancement. Pakistan was fearful that the Soviet Union will one day fulfill its nefarious designs in its pursuit of hot waters. Soviet Union was a constant threat because of Pakistan's geographical proximity. The climax reached when Soviet Union attacked and occupied Afghanistan in 1979. Pakistan became the front line state against the so called evil empire in US-led proxy war.

National character exposes itself in the behavior of nations. Antimilitarism and an aversion to standing armies are the hallmarks of American and British national character. As against this, the same institutions of army and warship were worshipped in Prussia, ultimately transforming it into Nazi Germany. The tradition of obedience to authority in Russia and the constant fear of foreigners resulted in acquiescing in to the dictates of a strong central authority and love for strong military establishments [Morgenthau and Thompson, 1999, 183]. The national character of Pakistan which is based on constant fear of India has also resulted in large military establishment. It forced Pakistan to join the American camp during the Cold War and after as against India which was close to Soviet Union. In order to fortify its security, Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO and also developed nuclear arsenal. Pakistan's defense policy is India specific to whom it considers its chief rival in the region. Its policy of strategic depth in Afghanistan has forced it to support Taliban as against the Northern alliance.

On the other hand, the region of Pakistan has sufficient natural resources as well as biodiversity to support its needs. However the size of population is increasing at high rate and also there is mismanagement of the resources. It is evident from the examples of history that population growth forced people to adopt

intensified means of production ultimately depleting their resources which initially seemed abundant [Diamond, 2006, 6-9]. The current rate of population growth and extraction of resources is making Pakistan ecologically fragile and leading it towards ecological suicide. The population growth rate is so high that even near future projections lay bare many ecological threats for Pakistan. Ironically, the population growth rate necessitates equal rapid industrial growth and food production which will have adverse impact on environment conservation.

So, geography is one of the major factors which determine the position of a state on the political map of the world. It also affects the process of building a national character. And in the case of Pakistan, geography is ultimate cause behind its current situation and also in the shaping of national character of Pakistan along with other proximate causes. However, the initiation of the process of building China Pakistan Economic Corridor which open up another Pandora box in terms of opportunities and compulsions for the state and society of Pakistan. Pakistan is going to be embedded in Asian economies and thereby unleash its geographical potential of being strategically located for harnessing benefits by offering a trading hub to the world. Thus, the answers of many of the past and contemporary questions about the politics and economy of Pakistan lie in the geography of this country.

History and National Character

The course of history is understood by studying the chains of proximate and ultimate causes [Diamond, 2005, 422]. Differences between countries in their historical and social developments are mainly determined by environmental and geographical factors. Geography affects the course of history, in other words [Diamond, 2005, 26]. These historical experiences leave their marks on the character and habits of their people. Historical experiences play a major role in shaping the national character of a nation. People's habits typically bear the marks of their country's history and government, and of the state under which they live. These factors have long-term and all-pervasive effects on the way people see themselves, how they perceive the rest of the world and how others see them.

The important historical factors which have shaped the psycho-social environment of Pakistan include the continuous onslaughts on this region starting from Aryans till the ongoing Americans' so called war against terror, the long Muslim rule over Hindu majority in the Indian subcontinent, the brutalities at the time of the 'great divide of 1947', and last but not the least, the 1971 disintegration as a result of protracted civil war and an attendant Indian attack. So the caste ridden, ritualistic and conservative society of Pakistan is result of thousand years of its historical conditioning. This conditioning has born an indelible impact on the broader patterns of social psychology of the people of these areas.

One of the most important factors which have shaped the identity consciousness in South Asia is the tremendous rise of Muslims in sub-continent from thirteenth to the Seventeenth century. Then came the British and the Muslim power went to a steep decline. After the uprising of 1857, the last symbolic

authority of Mughal Empire came to an end with the capture of Bahadar Shah Zafar. The failure of uprising was a critical episode and resultant British repression fell especially heavily on Muslims. The last vestiges of the Mughal Empire were wound up and many Muslims were dismissed from the British service. Intentionally or unintentionally, British rule also came to favor the Hindu upper castes above the old Muslim elites [Sayeed, 2004, 13-14]. However, the most important of all was the introduction of the representative institutions from the 1880s onwards. As Muslims were outnumbered by the Hindu majority, they were permanently relegated to a lower and subordinate position in India and they saw their similar status in the future of India too [Dar, 2003, vii]. It was due to these apprehensions, and realities during a brief interval of Congress ministries of 1937-39, on the basis of what they demanded a separate homeland for them.

The Muslims of the sub-Continent responded to these challenges from the British and the Hindus. To some extent these responses continue to shape the present Pakistani thinking and public debate. There were two kinds of responses. One school of thought who was led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan favored secular education and mobilization, the other school which was an heir to the tradition of Shah Walliaullah focused on religious renewal [Sayeed, 2004, 14-16 also see, Kamran, 2015, 1-35]. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, and his close associates stood in the direct tradition of Sir Syed. It was a tradition which saw the Muslims of the Sub-Continent as a kind of nationality defined by language and religiously influenced culture, rather than by religion as such. In Pakistan, this tradition of nationalist modernization has been followed by two of Pakistan's military leaders, Ayub Khan and Pervez Musharraf, and by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Sir Syed's program of western style modernization remains the ideology of the Pakistani civil service and the elite class.

Before 1947, the history of Muslim rule and cultural achievement in South Asia along with other factors made it impossible for Muslims to accept a subordinate position in what they saw as a future Hindu-dominated India. By the same token, for a long time after independence and to a degree even today, Pakistanis have felt that they not only must compete with India, but must compete on an equal footing; and that to accept anything less would be a humiliating betrayal. The Pakistani Muslims think themselves as heir to the Muslim Indian Empire, descended from a race of conquerors and rulers. There is therefore a streak of militarism in Pakistan's ethos, even at the popular level.

The decline of Muslim power in the sub-continent forced the Indian Muslims to follow the course which was being followed all over the Muslim world, a complex set of cultural and religious responses- the great majority of which, however, had the same ultimate goal, namely to strengthen the power of Muslims in the face of their enemies. Hostility towards a Hindu-dominated India is genetically injected in Pakistani blood.

In 1947, the partition followed a brutal course. Hundreds of thousands Muslim migrants were slaughtered by Sikhs and Hindus and vice versa. The people who were able to reach their destination safely carried with them the memories of

inhuman treatment [Ali, 2012, 154]. These memories of a trauma are still fresh in the minds of the people and shape their outlook vis-à-vis India. The anger and trauma of first generation of migrants was transferred to second generation and it is still alive. Pakistanis consider India as their arch enemy and this view was further crystallized by 1948, 1965, 1971 and 1998 wars.

An important factor which shapes the psycho-social environment of Pakistan is the religious and secular responses to resist the Western influence by the prominent religious figures during the 18th and 19th centuries. Shah Waliullah (1703-62), was an important religious reformist who emphasized the return to a purer form of Islam. Today Taliban and Wahabis are following in the footsteps of this tradition. They are even attacking the shrines of the saints. Shah Waliullah's teachings inspired the Deobandi tradition which in recent years has inspired political Islamism in Pakistan.

Pakistan's political culture is naturally a strong product of its past, including its people's earlier history under the British Raj. What Pakistan's leaders knew best from this inheritance was the viceregal system that made little or no provision for popular awareness or involvement in central government [Sayeed, 2004, 279]. The system was designed to rule over a subjected population and intended to effectively keep order and collect taxes. However the early death of Mohammad Ali Jinnah was loss of a great individual who had the capacity to organize and lead the nation on the road to stability and constitutional order [Niaz, 2006, 265]. The certain idiosyncratic individuals influenced the course of history [Diamond, 2005, 419-20]. The untimely death of capable leader like Jinnah was a great loss for a newly born country and it had impact on future trajectories of state and society in Pakistan.

In consequence, the public was left untutored in the kind of vigilance usually needed to hold political leaders and public office holders accountable. The subsequent education of people to accept democracy through meaningful participation in their political affairs was minimal. Many basic issues of the country like nature of the constitution, national language/s, administrative reforms, role of military and parity between the provinces remained unsolved for a very long period of time because no leader had guts and popularity to solve them. Without wide public awareness and an effective public opinion, the political system gave birth to over-ambitious and corrupt political leaders. Non-representative institutions surpassed the representative institutions in strength and stature.

Trauma and National Character

Human beings are influenced by their environment [Ibid., 20]. The more peaceful the environment the more serene and peaceful the people of that region. It is visible in their national character. An atmosphere filled with bloodletting, a bad law and order situation and rivalries among different ethnicities makes the inhabitants of that particular region fearful, suspicious and uncertain. Unfortunately, since its birth Pakistan has experienced many tumultuous events

which shape the national outlook of its people in general and its policy makers in particular.

The partition plan of British India that led to the creation of separate states of India and Pakistan was prepared in circumstances of urgency as religious and ethnic unrest was shaking India and Empire was in hurry to be rolled back [Ali, 2012, 151]. Under the guidelines prepared in the guidance of Britain's last viceroy in India, Lord Louis Mountbatten, the perplexing and Herculean task of establishing the new boundaries of Muslim state of Pakistan was accomplished. The status of Kashmir and some other princely states was unclear which contributed in the development of hostility between India and Pakistan. The national character of Pakistan is shaped by its rich history, pre-Islamic as well as Islamic, but colored in particular by the exigencies of its troubled and bloody birth as a nation state in 1947. The memories of the partition plan and its attendant dislocation and massacre are still fresh adding fuel to the fire of already embittered relations between India and Pakistan. The partition of British India followed a brutal course because the division of Pakistan and India was preceded and accompanied by communal riots of unprecedented violence and scope. Millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to flee across the newly drawn borders [Talbot and Thandi, 2004, xv].

The nation was also dealt with a severe psychological trauma when in September 1948, only thirteen months after independence, Mohammad Ali Jinnah died. Three years later Jinnah's lieutenant and the first Prime minister, Liaqat Ali Khan was assassinated in October 1951. Jinnah's and Liaquat's leadership, so critical to the nation in its infancy, was replaced in the early and mid-1950s by the generally lackluster and often inept performances of the nation's politicians and bureaucrats. Politics in Pakistan, after Liaqat Ali Khan, was characterized by absence of statesmanship which led to the politics of non-consensus [Kukreja, 2003, 9]. The events of Jinnah's death and Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination led to political instability which remained hallmark of the politics of Pakistan during 1950s. It is noteworthy that "Pakistan had six prime ministers and one C-in-C in [first] eight years, whereas in the same period India had one prime minister and six C-in-Cs" [Ibid., 30].

The bifurcated parts of Pakistan that existed from August 1947 to December 1971 was composed of two parts, or called as wings, known as East Pakistan and West Pakistan, separated by 1,600 kilometers of Indian Territory. The people of the two wings were poles apart from each other in language and cultural traditions: that the Bengali "monsoon Islam" of the East Wing was alien to the "desert Islam" of the West Wing. The East Wing, notable for its Bengali ethnic homogeneity and its collective Bangla cultural and linguistic heritage, contained over half of the population of Pakistan and sharply contrasted with the ethnic and

linguistic diversity of the West Wing. The West Wing contained four major ethnic groups—*Punjabis, Pashtuns, Sindhis, and Baloch*. The *muhajirs* constituted a fifth important ethnic group. It was important yet difficult to create a homogeneous nation from these ethnically diverse groups settled in separate provinces. The relations between the two geographically far off wings, hostile country lying in the middle of these two halves, embittered with the realization of geopolitical realities and constrains and resulted in the final secession of East Pakistan.

The most traumatic and psychologically devastating event in the country's historical experience was the humiliating defeat of Pakistan's armed forces by India and the secession of East Pakistan [Waseem, 2007, 447]. In early December 1971, India entered the war and decisively defeated the Pakistan military within weeks. From the aftermath of the war and the dismemberment of Pakistan, a new nation state of Bangladesh was born. To most Pakistanis, the news of Pakistan's defeat came as a devastating shock— 90 thousand armed soldiers of their military surrendered, disgraced and condemned for its brutal crackdown in East Pakistan.

The 1979 Russian invasion of Afghanistan and occupation raised fears among the Pakistanis that Russia will end up occupying Pakistan in its pursuit of hot waters, as it was portrayed by the military regime of the time. Pakistan was the frontline state of a US led proxy war against Russia in Afghanistan. It became a hotbed for the training of Jihadists and became a conduit of drugs economy in Afghanistan conducted mostly through Pakistan. It resulted in terrorism and Talibanisation of Pakistani society. Now Pakistan is victim of American onslaught in so called war against terrorism. The specter of suicide bombing has afflicted Pakistan in the aftermath. Resultantly, Pakistan suffered economically, socially, politically and culturally.

Pakistanis seem to be living under a siege mentality. Ethnic and sectarian movements have shaken asunder the societal fabric of the country. The state is unable to timely and effectively respond to these challenges. As a result, these disparate elements are encouraged to widen their areas of operation horizontally as well as vertically. The specter of suicide bombing is now a phenomenon not restricted to the tribal areas alone. Baluchistan is under siege by separatists for almost a decade. The provincial administration, in this strategic province, is busy in chores of their own merry and money making, corrupting the entire system from top to bottom. This lack of order has created a dysfunctional equilibrium in Pakistan and has made it pliable to external dictates, even after the entry of China regarding its project of CPEC.

The ongoing conflict in Pakistan has deeply disturbed the psycho-social fabric of the society. Consequently, the overall atmosphere remains smoky, uncertain and fearful. The violence has had direct psychological impact on the people of Pakistan in general and the people living in the conflict zones in particular. Their constant exposure to violence has engendered many psychological problems along with social and economic ones, in some cases in the form of serious mental illness of the people.

The geopolitical location of Pakistan, lack of political wisdom and organization to respond the challenges, the wave of terrorism, and institutional instability have made it a vulnerable country, to say the least. People living in the conflict zones have shown symptoms of acute stress, post-traumatic stress disorders, depression, fear, anxiety, and loss of appetite and sleep disturbances, which is evident from the daily national news stories. In general, conflict has negatively impacted the national character of Pakistanis at large. People are inclined towards escapism and refrain from the hard work and focus on work. The TV footages of frequent bomb blasts, fighting and bloodshed have left negative impact on the psyche of common viewer in the country. In response, some major TV news channels have developed a code of conduct regarding coverage of terror incidents, wherein they have made themselves committed to restrict the exposure of disturbing scenes on the screen.

Conclusion

Jared Diamond's philosophy of history helps us understand the present geographical, political and social vulnerabilities of the region of Pakistan. The long-term relation and experience of humans with geography and environment determines the national character. Soft factors which determine the national character include religion and ideology but the hard factors are geography, environment and historical experiences. The culture of a society is product of its environment, geography and historical experience. National character is influenced by historical and geographical factors more than anything else. In return, national character influences national power.

Pakistan has been a victim of its geostrategic location. It is located at the juncture of South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia. Different scholars have called Pakistan the "fulcrum of Asia" because since ancient times different invaders have used this route to attack the Indian sub-continent. These attacks by various conquerors have left great scars on the psychology of the people of this area. Pakistan also has few friendly trade partners and is surrounded by hostile neighbors.

Pakistan's national character is a strong product of its past, including its people's earlier history. Memory of different historical events and the purpose driven construction of the history of this region also have contributed in making the current mindset of the people. The traumatic events such as 1947 partition which caused the deaths of millions of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs on both side of the divide, the wars between India and Pakistan, and disintegration of East Pakistan, the present wave of terrorism and political chaos have greatly influenced the psycho-social environment of Pakistan. A sense of insecurity, trends of aggression and escapism have developed in Pakistani society. Pakistan is passing through tumultuous times. It is infested with extremism, fundamentalism, political and institutional instability and a national character personified by confusion which shapes its outlook.

No country can change its geographical realities; however, the visionary and futuristic approach of a society and wise leadership can address and deal with the

challenges and problems. Response of a society mainly depends on its political, economic, and social institutions and its national character [Diamond, 2006, 14-15]. Nature gives societies certain choices and the future of a society depends on the selection of the choices. The comparison made between the societies of Orkney Norse and other Greenland societies help us understand the success stories despite of fragile environment and also the collapse due to wrong choices [Ibid., 23, 211-276]. A national character is built as a result of combination of ultimate and proximate causes. The problems faced by Pakistani state and society are rooted in its history, geography and its lack of organizational capability. Addressing the challenges and making right choices may lead Pakistan towards a success story. A visionary leader can make a big difference in this respect. On the other hand making the wrong choices and continuing with irrational approach may lead towards the complete collapse of the society.

End Notes and Bibliography

¹ Jared Diamond is Professor of Geography at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is also a remarkable scholar in the fields of biology, physiology, ornithology and history. He has propounded his own philosophy of history. As a philosopher of history he gives certain keys to explain history and according to him these keys are biology, geography and environment. His books on world history include *Guns, Germs and Steel: A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13000 Years* (London: Vintage Books, 2005), *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive?* (London: Penguin Books, 2006) and *The World Until Yesterday* (London: Penguin Books, 2012).

² This phenomenon is evident from the present economic crises in Greece and other weak economies of Europe and the adverse impact of these crises on the other members of the European Union.

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